

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



No. This was just not possible. I'm not old enough - or at least don't usually feel old enough - to grapple with this lifetime milestone.

But there it was, all spelled out in black and white: "It's hard to believe that it's been 25 years since we graduated."

Hard to believe, indeed. The Class of '63. Born in '45, leading wave of the postwar Baby-Boom flood, washing across the nation's sociological structure, and tumbling in its wake established demographic patterns, traditions, and lifestyles.

Now, here it was, a quarter-

century after our high school graduation. And, as we have every five years, we gather for a few brief hours to laugh and reminisce, share pictures and problems, and compare graying and/or less hair, added pounds, and general satisfaction with our lots in life.

Notification first came while snow still covered the ground and freezing winds whipped south from the northern pole (hard to remember that, isn't it?). A night of reunion in August sounded so far away.

Now, so quickly, it's history. And, I don't remember when an evening passed so fleetingly and

enjoyable away.

"Gosh, you haven't changed at all" was overheard frequently in snatches of conversation. But, of course, we all have, some are to very lesser degrees, and a few to the extreme where we indiscreetly (we hoped) took sidelong glances through the subdued lighting to read nametags.

Many of us share the bond of children in college or recently married. Some proudly mention grandchildren. A few are parenting toddlers.

Our careers represent a true cross-section of employment available across our great land. We are truckers and teachers, vice-presidents and foremen, secretaries and social workers, real estate specialists, homemakers, management specialists, consultants, independent businesspersons, and at least one judge. A personal friend and classmate instructs midwifery at a prestigious hospital in Philadelphia.

Some of us have scattered to homes and careers in Florida and Michigan, Utah and Texas, and the border states surrounding our Commonwealth. Several are scattered across the state. By and large, however, a majority of our hundred and eighty have stayed within the boundaries of our beautiful York County.

A dozen of us married classmates; only six remain wed to their classmate sweethearts.

Two of us - The Farmer and I - remain the only full-time farmers. And that simply mirrors general sociological changes in these two dozen-plus years.

For it was the era of our schooling years which witnessed the beginning of conversion of our rural farmland areas to crops of high-ranchers, townhouses, shopping malls and industrial parks. Soon after our graduation the course in Future Farmers was terminated permanently.

We are, perhaps, more open to one another now than we were during the peer-pressure, circles-of-friends, years of high school. Age and experience have diminished

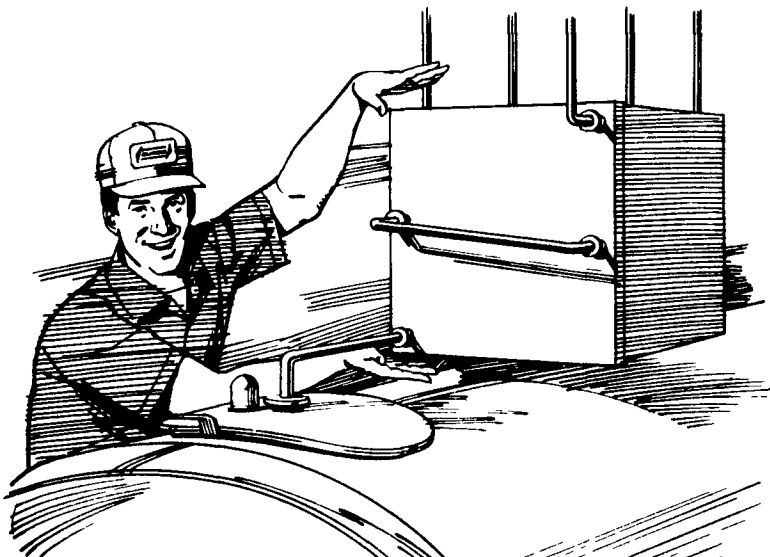
those barriers which divided us into groupings by neighborhood, major studies, activities and interests which inevitably result in every class.

Sadly, four of our number have died. Their memory, especially enhanced by such a significant occasion as a twenty-fifth reunion, is a poignant reminder of the rapidly passing seconds tucking off each of our mortal lives.

For probably numerous reason, we've lost touch with maybe a tenth of our number. Some still live locally; other's lives may have carried them far distant. Sad, too, that only about a third of us could be there. For no doubt a myriad of reasons, many were prevented from or chose not to be part of this gathering of memories.

They were missed.

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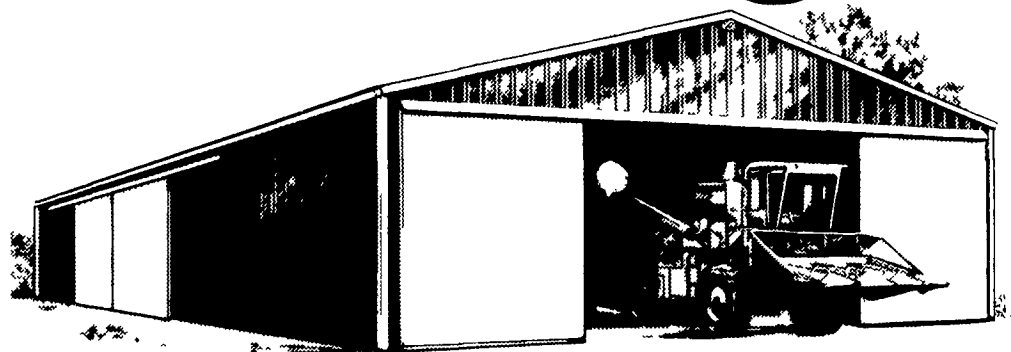
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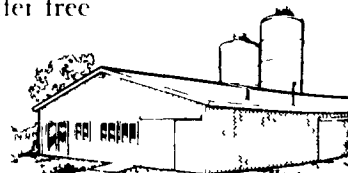
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